

9983 La Flechere (J. G. de)
T H E
PENITENT THIEF:

OR, A
NARRATIVE

Of two women fearing God, who visited in prison a
highway-man, executed at Stafford, April the 3d, 1773

WITH A
Letter to a condemned malefactor:
AND

A Penitential Office,

FOR EITHER
A true churchman, or a dying criminal,
ENTIRELY EXTRACTED
From the scriptures and the established liturgy.

By a COUNTRY CLERGYMAN.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance,
that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of
whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained
mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all
long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should here-
after believe on him to life everlasting. 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

THE SECOND EDITION.

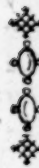
L O N D O N :

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P E N I T E N T T H I E F.

❖❖❖❖ F *justice and truth* are debts that we owe to all men, without excepting a dead malefactor; when we publish his crimes it is certainly wrong to swell the black catalogue, by rashly charging him with the commission of the *unpardonable sin*. An honest man has no right to rob a *penitent* thief of the honour of dying *better* than he lived, which is the only alleviation of infamy that his deplorable case can possibly admit of.

A letter which I wrote to the unfortunate young man, who is the subject of the following narrative; and which some hasty publishers of dying speeches have printed without my leave, having given a kind of sanction to a groundless report, that he died "*quite unconcerned*," as a stupid hardened reprobate; I think it my duty to clear him from the charge of *final impenitency*, a sin far more destructive than those crimes for which he justly suffered. Nor do I see why even a *dead* thief should be wrong'd, especially when doing him justice may profitably entertain, and savingly edify the *living*.

John Wilkes was born at Darlaston, about three miles from Wolverhampton in Staffordshire. His father dying when he was a child, his mother bound him apprentice to a collier, who unfortunately delighted in cock-fighting; a barbarous sport, at which wicked men too frequently train up idle boys in all manner of mischief; eagerly teaching them by their bad example the destructive art of betting, lying, cheating, squandering, cursing, swearing, cruelty, hating work, getting drunk, breeding quarrels, making riots, and

fighting as fiercely as the poor animals which they excite to tear each other in pieces.

At such a school and under such an instructor was John Wilkes brought up. When he had acquired some skill in this savage sport, which soon became his occupation, his master was suddenly called to give an account of himself and of his charge. A quantity of coals fell upon him in the pit, and he was killed on the spot. Thus was his young apprentice left to walk alone in *the broad way that leads to destruction*. Alone, did I say? Alas! how could he walk without company in a road, where herds of filthy swine incessantly follow droves of sly foxes, or of ravenous wolves? In a road where brutish slaves of sensual pleasures, perpetually tread upon the heels of crafty cheats, or of cruel extortioners?

It was not long then, before the fatherless and masterless youth linked himself with a set of wild boys, *whose feet were as swift as his own, to shed the blood of harmless animals in cruel sport*: And some of them having already made a greater proficiency in wickedness than himself, greatly hastened his ruin, together with the following circumstance. He had an uncommon success in laying wagers. Many took notice that for a considerable time all the cocks for which he interested himself came off conquerors. The Scripture says, that *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them*. This proverb was truly verified in him. By his successful betting he got money; and the more he got, the more averse he grew to work, the more eager to pursue his gainful sport, and the better able to defray the expence of his night revels.

To be short, his mistress unable to manage him, released him for a trifling sum of money; and being obliged to provide for himself, he began to steal fowls, that he might have the pleasure of fighting those that would fight, and eating those that would not. Two or three years ago he was committed to Stafford jail, and soon after publicly whipt for that offence.

When punishment does not mend a wicked man, it infallibly hardens him. This was evident in John Wilkes.

Wilkes, who seemed bent upon shewing, that *the wicked shall not live out half his days*. Having got into a strong habit of idleness, sporting, and revelling, to support himself in his unhappy way of life, he was obliged to take larger strides in daring wickedness. Therefore from breaking into hen-roosts, with some of his companions he proceeded to break into and robbed the dwelling-house of a widow at Darlaston, and going upon the high-way he robbed a man of his watch and some money.

These robberies soon alarmed the neighbourhood, he was immediately suspected, and hunted up and down as a mischievous beast. For some days he escaped the hands of justice, but having run the length of his chain, and being already pursued by the terrors of death, and arrested by a guilty conscience, he was at last taken, and recommitted to Stafford jail. He took his trial at the last assizes, and, being found guilty of the above-mentioned robberies, received sentence of death with another young man, who in malicious sport had set fire to some barns, and a stack of hay.

Some days after his condemnation his eldest sister, who is my servant, received the following note, which one of the prisoners had wrote for him. "This informs you of my being a convict under sentence of death. I beg you will endeavour to prevail on Mr. Fletcher to grant me his interest for a reprieve, by getting me recommended to his Majesty's mercy. And I tenderly beg you will come over and see me here in a few days, who am your poor unfortunate brother,

Stafford-Jail,
March 17, 1773. }

JOHN WILKES."

Having frequently observed, that so long as condemn'd malefactors let their minds run upon a reprieve, they never apply to divine mercy with an earnestness proportionable to the shortness of their time, and the greatness of their danger; I thought it my duty to cut off

his *worldly* hopes as soon as possible. This I did in a letter which I sent him by the return of the post. The directions contained in that hasty performance being of a general nature, and such as may suit the case of other condemned malefactors, I insert them here with a few additional sentences.

John Wilkes,

Your sister desiring me to make application to some person in power, to get you reprieved for transportation; I take this first opportunity of informing you, that I was once concerned in saving a young man from the gallows, because he was condemned for his *first* offence, which was robbing his master of some money; and that I had no thanks, but many upbraidings for my pains; the poor creature having turned out very bad, done much mischief even before he left England, and been spared, I fear, only to hurt his fellow-creatures, and fill up the measure of his iniquities.

Besides, you know, John, that your crimes are of the most capital nature; you are not only an house-breaker, but an highway-man, and a very notorious offender. You know you have committed crimes enough to hang two or three men, perhaps half a dozen. And so far as I can gather from a variety of circumstances, you are the very person that broke open my house over the way, and robbed the poor widow who lives in it. If you committed that robbery, I desire you to confess it before you leave this world, for *he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall obtain mercy*; while he that tells lies to conceal them, pulls down double vengeance upon his guilty head.

But whether you committed that robbery or not, I earnestly desire that you will submit to your sentence. I neither *can* nor *will* meddle in that affair; nor have I any probability of success if I did. Apply then *yourself* night and day to the *King of heaven* for grace and mercy. If you cry to him from the bottom of your heart,

heart, as a condemned dying man, who deserves hell as well as the gallows; if you sincerely confess your crimes, and beg the son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ to intercede for you, it is not too late to get your soul reprieved: He will speak for you to God Almighty; he will pardon *all* your sins; he will wash you in his most precious blood; he will stand by you in your extremity; he will deliver you out of the hands of the *hellish* executioner; and tho' you have lived the life of the wicked, he will help you to die the death of the penitent. He can feel for poor *condemned* thieves, for he himself was *condemned* to be hanged on a tree, not indeed for his *own* sins, for he never transgressed, but for *your* crimes and mine.

O John, for God's sake, for your soul's sake, as you would not be turned off from this wicked world into an eternity of torments, into a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, apply day and night to that dear, bleeding Saviour. Consider him as hanging upon the cross by the nails that fastened him there. See him bearing your curse, your shame, your punishment. Behold him opening his arms of mercy to take you in, letting out his vital blood to wash away your sins, and graciously saying to you: "*Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden with your crimes and irons, and I will give rest to your troubled souls: Tho' your sins be red as crimson, they shall be white as snow: Look unto me and be saved: Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. I am the resurrection of the dead and the life of the living; he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead in sin and dead in law, yet shall he live; he shall not perish; yea, he shall have everlasting life. I came to save the chief of sinners with an everlasting salvation, when they return and repent; and if in the day of their visitation and distress they do not harden their hearts but call upon me, I will still give them grace to repent and turn. I myself was numbered among the transgressors, and hanged upon the cross between two thieves, that I might have mercy upon penitent dying thieves.*"

Now,

Now, John, these are the kind words of Christ to lost and undone sinners in your case. You must take courage and believe them: and lifting up your poor, stupid heart to him as well as you can, you must with every breath cry to him for mercy in some such words as these:

“ Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, Son of the living
 “ God! I have been justly condemned by an earthly
 “ judge, but O thou heavenly judge, Thou merciful king
 “ of Israel, reprieve my sinful soul: such royal power
 “ belongeth unto Thee. O let me not from the gallows
 “ be turned into hell! Pardon all my crimes! Wash
 “ me in thy precious blood; and knock off the chains
 “ from my guilty conscience! O Lord, I have de-
 “ stroyed myself, but in *thee* is my help! Save, or I
 “ perish! By thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy
 “ shame and condemnation, by thy cross and passion,
 “ by thy bitter and ignominious death, save my poor
 “ condemned soul, and deliver me not over to the bit-
 “ ter pains of the second death. Let the hands of hu-
 “ man justice push me into the arms of divine mercy.
 “ O thou friend of publicans and sinners, remember
 “ me now thou art in thy kingdom! Save me now as
 “ thou didst the penitent thief, and say to me on the
 “ day of my execution, as thou didst unto him on the
 “ cross, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*”

That such may be your repentance, John, and such your happy, tho’ untimely departure out of this wicked world, is the hearty prayer of your sincere well wisher, and sympathising fellow mortal,

Madeley, }
 March 23, 1773 }

JOHN FLETCHER.

Saturday, March 27th. I gave a few lines for the keeper of the Stafford jail, to Sarah Wilkes the malefactor’s sister, and to Elizabeth Childs a serious woman whom she had got to bear her company; and when I had recommended in prayer the condemned criminals to the Redeemer’s compassion, and their feeble visiters
 to

to the protection of him, who can give wisdom to the simple, open the gates of brass with or without a word, and send a blessing by the feeblest instrument; they set out with a design to see John Wilkes, and administer some spiritual comfort to him before he launched into eternity.

Nine days after, they returned and brought me, chiefly in writing, an hopeful account of his repentance. I say, *chiefly in writing*, for expecting that I would ask them a reason of their long absence, to give it with more exactness, Elizabeth Childs wrote a kind of journal, the greatest part of which you have in their own simple words, with some additional circumstances, that they told me by word of mouth, and which I thought essential to the narrative.

“ On Saturday evening, when we came to the prison, we delivered the letter, and it was carried to the jailer. We waited some time before we could see him. When he came, his countenance was so stern, and his words so harsh, that we were much afraid. He said, What do you want with John Wilkes? To preach him a sermon, and sing psalms! Do you? And turning to Sarah Wilkes, I suppose, said he, you are a preacher. Sir, said she, I am no preacher, but I should be glad to speak to him about his poor soul. I know very well what you are, said he, a parcel of canting hypocrites. She answer'd, Sir, he has been a very wicked lad, and is very ignorant. She was so fluttered that she forgot to say, he had sent for her. And pray, said he, what can you do for him with your preaching and cant? Then turning to Elizabeth Childs he said, Who are you? and what do *you* want? Then he pushed her away and called her a prating hussy when she had scarce spoken a word, and said, get about your business: his sister shall see him, but you shall not see him at all. So he sent for John up out of the dungeon into the parlour, and stood by while Sarah Wilkes spoke to him: but she was so afraid of setting the jailer in another passion, that she scarce durst speak. She charged him with the robbery, which he was supposed to have committed

committed at Madeley; and he denied it again. She said something more to him, but the jailer was soon tired and said, Well, have you done with your cant? So John was commanded to his dungeon, and we about our business.

"We were much discouraged at the jailer's behaviour. So we agreed to lay the matter before God in prayer, and beg of him, that if he would make us any way useful to the poor condemned men, he would touch the jailer's heart, and cause him to let us in: but that if our attendance would be of no use, we might not be admitted to see them, and we would go back without murmuring.

"The next morning, which was Sunday, after begging hard for grace, wisdom, and courage, we went to the prison to see if they would let us in. And to our great surprize the turn-key opened the door, and without speaking a word took us straight to the condemned men, and let us be with them, as long as we thought proper, a liberty which we were allowed twice a day till they suffered.

"To make the best of the time, we asked John Wilkes How he had spent the past night? He said, Praying as well as I could. *Wo.** What did you pray for? *J. W.* That the Lord would have mercy on me, and open my poor blind eyes. *Wo.* The Lord has declared that if a wicked man confesseth his sins, and forsakes them, he will have mercy upon him.—We next desired him not to answer, till he had considered the consequence of denying the truth in his circumstances; and then we strictly charged him with robbing the poor widow at Madeley. When we had done speaking he said, It would do me no good to deny it; but indeed, Sarah, I never did rob that house.

"As he seemed to be under great concern, we asked him if he should grieve at the sufferings of his body, and

* To make the dialogues of this narrative more plain, the publisher has distinguished the speakers by the letters *Wo.* and *J. W.*—*Wo.* are the initial letters of *Woman* or *Women.* and *J. W.* of *John Wilkes,*

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and at his shameful end, supposing he could believe that the Lord would have mercy on his soul. He said: No, not I, if I knew I should go to heaven; that is all I want. We asked him if he thought God would be just, in case he not only destroyed his body, but also sent his soul to hell. He shook his head, wept, and seemed very much cast down. He kept his flouched hat over his face, hung down his head, and looked indeed like a malefactor, condemned, not only before men, but also before God: for tho' he was ashamed to look any one in the face, we soon found, Blessed be God! that he was not ashamed to cry aloud for mercy.

"We asked him If the trouble of his mind sprung from his having brought himself to a shameful end, or from so grievously offending God? He answered, If I had not sinned against God, I had not been here for sinning against my neighbour. We asked him If he thought God was very angry with him? He said, I know he is angry with me. And then, as he appeared under strong convictions for sin, we asked, What sin is it that troubles your mind most? *J. W.* All my sins together. *Wo.* And do you think, If God was to give you what you deserve, he would send you to hell? *J. W.* Yes, but I hope he will have mercy on me: and then he cried out aloud, O blessed Lord, have mercy on me if it be thy blessed will! Open my blind eyes, and shew me what a sinner I am, I have been the worst of sinners sure—Lord have mercy on me! &c. These words, and others like them, he had over and over continually, with a loud and earnest voice: and he was so intent in putting them up, that he seemed to grudge us an answer, because it robbed him of a petition.

"We asked him, however, What was his greatest want? He said, I want nothing but mercy and to know that God will save my soul. *Wo.* If you knew that God would save your soul, Would you mind dying? *J. W.* No, for if I did not die now, I must die; and all I want is mercy, and to know that God will save me. *Wo.* Do you believe it is possible for God to pardon your sins, and let you know it? *J. W.* Yes, I believe
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he can, and it must be so; but I do not know how to get at it. *Wo.* And as you believe that God is *able*, do you believe that he is *willing* to save you? *J. W.* I hope he will. [He seemed even then to have the beginning of a good hope.] *Wo.* And how do you try to come to the knowledge of salvation? *J. W.* I pray as well as I can. *Wo.* How do you pray? *J. W.* I confess all my sins to him, I tell him that I am guilty, and beg for mercy.—And then with deep sighs he immediately began to cry for mercy without losing a moment. *Wo.* And how do you feel in your own breast? *J. W.* Sometimes when I am praying, my heart feels as if it was ready to burst with grief, and sometimes as if it would leap out of my body with desire of mercy, and then I am very joyful. *Wo.* And what does that joy spring from? *J. W.* From a hope that God will save me. *Wo.* While you feel that joy, are you afraid to die? *J. W.* No, not while I am joyful; but when that joy is gone, I know not what to do, I am almost distracted. He did not yet know in whom he believed, and his poor soul seemed to be like Noah's dove, fluttering about the ark.

“ Sarah Wilkes (who had often given him good counsels, and used to say to him, Jack, if thou dost not turn, thy wicked way will bring thee to the gallows, to which he sometimes answered by a sneer or a curse) now asked him: Do you not repent having slighted your mother's advice and mine? Before he could answer for himself, the man that was condemned with him, said; He has told me so since you were here: And he said himself, If I had taken your advice, I had not been here. Then he began again to call aloud for mercy.

“ By all that we could perceive, his heart seemed truly broken for sin, and with a sense of his danger. So we endeavoured to comfort him, and begged him to pray on for mercy. But you must not think, said we, that God will forgive you for your praying; but while you are praying, God will give you power to believe, that, for what Christ has done and suffered, he will pardon,

Pardon, or has pardoned all your sins. And when you feel in your breast that God is reconciled to you, and you can love him, then you will be glad to die to be with him. With great earnestness he answered: O! that is all I want. Lord, save me, if it be thy blessed will!

"The father of the other condemned young man had left two shillings with the jailer, to give his son a glass of wine every day on the week of his execution: and one of the prisoners said, It is pity but Jack could have a glass of wine too: Therefore we asked him if he wanted it, or any thing else. He said, No: I want nothing but the Lord.

"Soon after, a man said to the two condemned criminals, with whom we were talking in the dungeon, Lads, you may walk out into the yard for a little air if you please. John said, I don't care whether they put me in or out of the dungeon. Then he began his usual cry for mercy, scarcely sparing time to give an answer, and doing it in as few words as possible.

"However, we asked him the following questions. *Wo.* What think you of those men who were so kind as to let us in, when it lies in their power to keep us out? *J. W.* I am very thankful for it, your conversation encourages me to hope. *Wo.* Well, the Lord help you to pray on, but remember, we can do nothing for you. It is the Lord that must save you. *J. W.* Yes, I know it is the Lord alone that must save me. And when we had prayed with him we had the comfort of leaving him praying for himself.

"From that time the Lord gave us great encouragement to talk to them, and much freedom of Spirit to pray with them, without regarding the other prisoners, and strangers, who sometimes stood at the door listening to what we said.

"On Tuesday morning we visited them again, and asked John Wilkes how he found himself. He said, 'This last night I have been much comforted in praying to the Lord, and I do hope, and believe, that he will save me. *Wo.* Does your comfort spring from a hope

hat he will forgive you, or that he has forgiven you ? *J. W.* That he will forgive me. I think, if I was to die just when I feel that hope and happiness, the Lord would save me. *W.* Then you don't think the Lord has forgiven you ? *J. W.* No; that is all I want; for though I am sometimes comforted, yet my sins are very heavy and burthensome to my soul.

" To judge better of the state of his mind, his sister said, Whom do you love most ? Whom do you want to see ? At this he shook his head, and said, I want to know and love the Lord, and to know that he loves me; I want nothing else. Yet sometimes thoughts about other things come into my mind, but I pray to God to take them away. *W.* Can you tell what thoughts they are that trouble you ? *J. W.* Sometimes it comes very quick and sharp, that I shall not be hanged, but I know that comes from the devil. This and some other thoughts come, that I do not remember; for I strive to remember nothing but the Lord. Sarah Wilkes said, my dear brother, do you see it a mercy, that the Lord did not let a coal fall on you in the pit, and dash you to pieces, without giving you a moment's time to repent ? He said, yes. She added, Do you think the Lord deals hard with you to shut you up in this dismal dungeon ? *J. W.* No, I do not care where they put me, what they give me, and what they do to me. *W.* Well, that is right. Then you see every thing and place too good for you, do you ? *J. W.* Yes, I do. All is too good for such a sinner as I am. Then he began to call aloud for mercy, and we helped him as well as we could.

" On Wednesday morning we went to see him and his fellow-malefactor; but when we were in the prison-yard, we heard them praying so earnestly for mercy, that we thought it pity to disturb them. Some of John Wilkes's petitions were, Lord have mercy on me, open my blind eyes, and shew me more and more what a sinner I am. Sure, Lord, I am the worst of sinners, Lord have mercy on me, &c.

" As we were earnest to know how they spent their time when we were absent, we asked the rest of the prisoners

prisoners, if they often prayed as hard as they did then : and they said, Yes, very often, just as you hear them now. Another time we asked the turn-key if he frequently heard them cry to God in that manner. He said, O yes, when I pass, I always hear them. And on another occasion one of the prisoners said of his own accord ; Those prayers and cries are enough to make a heart of stone to bleed.

“ As we found them so well employed, without going to their dungeon, we retired to our own room in the inn, where we joyned our prayers and tears to theirs, as we did many times a day ; being greatly encouraged to entertain hopes of their salvation, by the heart-breaking groans we heard from them, as well as by the access we found ourselves at the throne of grace. This was the only morning we missed seeing them.

“ In the evening we went again to the prison, and asked John Wilkes how he found his mind. He said, sometimes when I am praying I am very comfortable, I could be always praying : The more I pray, the more I would pray, and the more delightful it is to me. These words he said at most visits, especially towards the last. *Wo.* How long does your comfort last ? *J. W.* Sometimes but about a minute. *Wo.* And how do you feel in your own breast when that comfort is gone ? *J. W.* I doubt God will not save me, and my heart is ready to burst. [And we could easily believe it, as the greatest sorrow and distress were visible upon his countenance, tears frequently trickling down while he cried for mercy.] *Wo.* And what do you do then ? *J. W.* I am frightened, and I pray till the Lord comforts me again, and then I believe he will save me. *Wo.* Did you think any thing of our not coming to visit you this morning ? *J. W.* No, nor do I want any body to come when I am much drawn out in prayer. *Wo.* If you think we disturb you we will not come again. *J. W.* Yea, but I love to hear you talk, but when my heart is quite taken up, I find most comfort in praying to the Lord ; and then I do not want any body to talk with me. But I had rather see

you come than the gentleman that visits us, for he says nothing of what you say. *Wo.* What does he say to you? *J. W.* He reads prayers and says, Lads, your time is short, you must make the best use of it you can, and that is all. *Wo.* Does he not point you to Christ, and tell you in what *manner* you must make the best use of your time? *J. W.* No. *Wo.* Does it not trouble you to think, that Saturday (the day fixed for your execution) is so near? And do not you wish that your time was longer? *J. W.* No, I do not wish any thing about it, all my thoughts and desires now are to the Lord for mercy, and the forgiveness of my sins.

“On Thursday morning Betty Childs staid at the Inn, and I went to the prison with my mother, who was come to see her dying son for the last time. Before we came to the door of the dungeon, we heard him pray in a most lamentable manner: His voice was quite altered, and pierced me so that I was ready to sink. His chief cry was, O blessed Lord, what shall I do? Have mercy on me the worst of sinners!

“When the turn-key opened the door, his posture affected me as much as his cries. His body was bent forward, and was supported by his hands, which rested upon some lumber in the dungeon. He was so intent on wrestling with God, that he minded neither the opening of the door, nor his distressed mother. He did not so much as turn his head; but kept on calling for mercy, in a manner which so moved me, that I could not stand it, and thought it best to get my mother away as fast as I could, before we swooned in the dungeon. She just said to him, as he called aloud for mercy, He will, my dear child, have mercy on thee: but whether he heard her or not I do not know. However she went to him to kiss him. He just lifted up his head, and tears run down his face like rain, but he kept calling on the Lord. While before the throne of God, where he sued for mercy, he had not time to take notice of either sister or mother.

“In the afternoon I went again to him, with Betty Childs, and asked him how he found his mind towards

God

God. He could speak to us then, and said, I am very happy to what I was in the morning. *Wo.* What makes you so happy? *J. W.* I am filled with joy in believing that the Lord will forgive me all my sins, and save me. *Wo.* Then you do not yet believe that he *has* forgiven you. *J. W.* No, but I believe he *will*. *Wo.* Are you expecting it every moment? *J. W.* Yes, I am, and I believe he *will* forgive me. Lord have mercy on me, if it is thy blessed will; for surely I have been the worst of sinners!

"We asked him, if he believed that God was with us in the prison. He said, Yes, I know he is here, because he comforts me. We then spoke comfortably to him, and said, *Hold fast the beginning of your confidence in the Lord's coming, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* Pray now for power to believe, that God for Christ's sake *has* forgiven you all your sins; and beg that he would shed abroad in your heart his redeeming love, which is better than life. He took the advice, and that very evening the Lord made his goodness pass before him.

"On Friday morning we visited him as usual, and asked him how he was. But his countenance answered for him. It looked calm and pleasant. Betty Childs never saw *all* his face till that morning. Now instead of hanging it down, it was turned up with wishful looks towards heaven. He said, I am very happy. *Wo.* How so? *J. W.* I do believe the Lord *has* forgiven me all my sins. *Wo.* When? *J. W.* Last night, when I had been praying about an hour after we had been locked down, it came quick into my mind three times over, *Thy sins are all forgiven thee;* and I do believe they are, and I am not afraid to die.

"As he directly fell to prayer again, one of us, to try him, said, Now you believe that your sins are all pardoned, do you find need to pray yet? O yes, said he, more and more. And then he began to pray aloud with great earnestness. But we took notice that there was an alteration in his prayer. Before, the burden of it was, Lord save me if it be thy blessed will;

but now it was, Lord strengthen me to believe more and more. He also mixed praises with it, chiefly in these words, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, now and for ever more ! O blessed Lord, what a sweet Lord thou art ! Be with me this blessed day ! With hands and eyes lifted up he praised and prayed these words over and over many times. As the Lord had helped us to weep and pray with him, we were now enabled to praise and rejoice together. And the other malefactor seemed also to share our common happiness

“ On the Friday evening the jailer gave strict charge that none of the other prisoners should speak bad words in their hearing (which at other times they frequently did) and those who could, should join them in prayer all night, and some of them told us the next morning they all did. John Wilkes lived two nights after he had got his reprieve from the King of Kings ; but he *slept* no more, so far as we could gather from the words of the prisoners and his own. The power of God so supported him, and his awful circumstances so kept him awake, that he spent *all* his time in praising the Lord, or in calling upon him for more strength.

“ Saturday, April the 3d, the day of his execution he was exceeding happy, and employed in breathing out prayers and praises to God. In the morning we spent about two hours with him and his fellow-prisoner, praying and praising together in their dungeon with much brokenness of heart, and many tears of joy and sorrow, for we were both persuaded that John Wilkes had saving faith, and an unshaken well grounded confidence that God would take him to glory.

“ We were loath to spend one moment in talking, as prayer and praise took up our time best. However, Betty Childs asked him, If he found his faith and love to Christ stronger that day than the day before. He said, O yes, I do, I do ! The work is finished : Lord Jesus, I do believe thou hast forgiven me all my sins ! My blessed Lord, my loving father of heaven, strengthen me to believe more and more, and be with me these
few

few last moments I have to live, and do not let me mind the sufferings of this world : But my sweet Lord, let me not suffer in the next ! O my dear Lord, have mercy on me, if it be thy blessed will ! What a great sinner have I been against thy holy name ! Sure I have been the worst of sinners against thy holy name ! [*It was awful to see with what reverential fear he spoke those words over and over, against thy holy name.*] Then he added, O my sweet loving Lord, pardon all my sins, and let not one be unpardoned when I come before thee this blessed day !—Lord, I do believe thou hast pardoned all my sins ! But O my dear Lord, strengthen me to believe more and more, and be with me these few last moments I have to live, *to* the last moment, and *in* the last moment ! O my Lord, open my blind eyes, and shew me the way to thy heavenly kingdom ! Let me suffer what thou wilt in this world, only do not let me suffer in the next ! O Lord, remember me, as thou didst the thief upon the cross !—Then looking round upon us with a mixture of joy and tenderness, he said, O my sweet heavenly Lord, let us *all* meet in paradise with thee ! These were a few of his broken petitions ; but he had them over and over, with many others that we cannot justly remember.

“ This was his frame of mind when he was commanded up into the jail-yard, where the smith waited to knock off his irons. He went thro’ that operation (which almost broke the heart of his fellow-malefactor) without any emotion, quietly and calmly turning his legs as he was bid, and praying all the while, My sweet heavenly Lord, strengthen me more and more ! What a blessed sweet Lord thou art ! He seemed to be at a loss for words to express the love which he felt in his heart for Christ, but his few broken sentences were very weighty.

“ While they went to receive the sacrament, we retired to beseech the God of ordinances to meet them, and strengthen them to call upon and believe in him to the last.

“ About

“ About two hours before the execution, which was between four and five in the evening, his sister, notwithstanding the hurry there is generally in a jail on such occasions, got to him once more. He looked pleasant and chearful. She had just time to point him again to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, and to say, Dost thou find thyself happy in the Lord? To which he answered, Yes, I do, I do, more and more.

“ When he took his solemn walk to the place of execution, he looked like a true penitent. He had so spent himself in hard prayer and constant wrestling with God for mercy, that we were afraid he could not have performed his last journey; but the Lord gave him fresh strength, not only to walk, but to pray and praise, which he did aloud all the way. Elizabeth Childs followed him to the place of execution, as near as she could for the crowd; and sometimes heard his words, which were chiefly the same that he used in the jail after the Lord had manifested himself to him. According to custom, they had put a book into his hands, tho’ he did not know a letter. And as he looked down and prayed earnestly, some of the people, supposing that he read, said, This young man reads like a Parson. When they were come to the place of execution, John Wilkes’s companion desired the spectators, especially young people, to take warning by them, which was the more affecting, as he was supposed to be only about twenty years old, and John Wilkes was not above nineteen. They sung and prayed some time under the gallows, and the last words that John Wilkes was heard to speak, were, Lord, from this place receive me into thy heavenly kingdom! When he was turned off he seemed to be dead in a moment. His hands were joined together, as became a praying and dying criminal, and it was with difficulty they could be parted, when he was stript of his coat and put into the coffin.

“ A serious gentleman from Woolverhampton, obtained leave at the gallows to speak to John Wilkes about a robbery, of which he had been suspected, and in

in which he denied having been concerned ; and when the execution was over, he said, that " John Wilkes had the look of a Christian, and he believed that he was got safe to his Father's house. " *

" We are not without hope concerning the happiness of his fellow-malefactor, tho' his words and behaviour did not always evidence so deep a repentance as that of John Wilkes. "

CONCLUSION.

Here ends the Narrative of the two persons who visited those unfortunate young men in prison. To engage candid readers to make allowances for its defects, I only need remind them, that the Authors are two women servants. And to give their testimony some weight, I shall just observe that the facts are quite recent, and that the narrators fear God, and agree in their account.

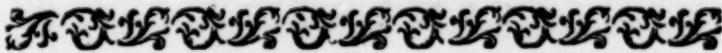
Condemned malefactor, or thou reputable sinner, who, as well as myself, art the fellow-mortal of dying criminals; if this narrative encourages thee to call with renewed ardor for mercy on him, who had once
mercy

* It is at that gentleman's request that this narrative is published. I have seen him lately, and he told me, that about three hours before the execution he got into the prison yard, and heard the condemned men praying in their cell just in the manner described in these sheets. He likewise informed me, that he had an opportunity of pointing them to the atoning blood at the gallows; and that John Wilkes in particular was so taken up with solemn prayer, that there appeared to be little or no need of exhorting him to cast himself into the Redeemer's arms, as he did it so heartily without any exhortation. His deep recollection, I suppose, together with the earnestness of his addresses to the throne of grace, prevented his minding the spectators and addressing them in a dying speech.

mercy on a penitent dying thief, and who is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, the end of this publication is abundantly answered: and that thou mayest not be at a loss for proper words to address God in, I present thee with a *penitential office*, suitable for either a *living sinner* or a *dying thief*.

Thou needest not be afraid to use it; for it is entirely taken from the scriptures and the liturgy of our church. May it help thy devotion, as it does that of the compiler, whenever he uses it with a solemn intention of exciting, exercising, or increasing *repentance*! — A grace so necessary for *thee*, for *him*, and for *all*, that when our Lord had said once, *Except ye repent, ye shall ALL perish*, he thus repeated the solemn warning: *Suppose ye that these unfortunate Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, self-righteous sinners, nay: but except YE repent, ye shall all likewise perish*: that is, as unexpected a destruction awaits you *all*. The arm of divine vengeance, heavier than the *tower of Siloam*, will crush you *all*. Your blood shall be mystically mingled with your *sacrifices*: your hypocritical worship will cost you your lives well as murder; for the impenitent *that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man*; *he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck*; and *he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood*. Luke xiii. 3, 4, 5. and Isa. lxvi. 3.





A
PENITENTIAL OFFICE;

FOR EITHER

A true church-man, or a condemned
malefactor,

ENTIRELY EXTRACTED

From the scriptures and the established liturgy.

COMMINATION.

CURSED is he that in his heart goeth from the Lord. — Cursed are the unmerciful, fornicators and adulterers; covetous persons, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards and extortioners. *Jer. xvii. 5. Mat. xxv. 41. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.*

Now seeing that all they are accursed, who do err from the commandments of God, let *me* (remembering the dreadful judgment hanging over *my* head, and always ready to fall upon *me*) return unto the Lord, bewailing and lamenting my sinful life, acknowledging and confessing my offences, and seeking to bring forth worthy fruits of repentance. For now is the ax laid to the root of the trees, so that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He shall pour down rain upon sinners, snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest; this shall be their portion to drink. For lo, the Lord is come out of his place, to visit the wickedness of such as dwell upon the earth.

SEN.

S E N T E N C E.

Rent thy heart and not thy garment, and turn unto the Lord thy God for he is merciful. *Joel* ii. 13.

E X H O R T A T I O N.

The scripture moveth me to confess my manifold sins and wickedness with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, to the end that I may obtain forgiveness of the same, by God's infinite goodness and mercy.

C O N F E S S I O N.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men, I acknowledge and bewail my manifold sins and wickedness, which I most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty; provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against me. I have erred from thy ways like a lost sheep. I have followed the devices of my own heart. I have offended against thy holy laws. I have left undone those things which I ought to have done: [*Here pause, and think how from a child, you have neglected your duty towards God—your neighbour—and your own soul.*] I have done those things which I ought not to have done: [*Pause again, and consider your various crimes, with their peculiar aggravations.*] And there is no health in me. *I do* [or, *would*] earnestly repent, and *am* [or *would be*] heartily sorry for these my misdoings. The remembrance of them *is*, [or *should be*] grievous unto me, and the burden of them intolerable. Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father. For thy son Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past. And grant that I may ever hereafter, serve and please thee in newness of life, to the glory of thy name, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord,

C O L.

COLLECT I.

Almighty God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent ; create and make in me a new and contrite heart, that I worthily lamenting my sins, and acknowledging my wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Collect for Asb-wednesday.*

COLLECT II.

O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive, receive my humble petitions ; and tho' I be tied and bound with the chain of my sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose me, for the honour of Jesus Christ, my mediator and advocate. *Collect before the thanksgiving.*

COLLECT III.

O Lord, I beseech thee mercifully hear my prayers, and spare me, who confess my sins unto thee ; that I, whose conscience by sin is accused, by thy merciful pardon may be absolved, thro' Jesus Christ. *Communion.*

COLLECT IV.

O most mighty God, and merciful Father, who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather turn from his sins and be saved, mercifully forgive me my trespasses, receive and comfort me, who *am*, [or *should be*] grieved and wearied with the burden of my sins. Thy property is always to have mercy. To thee only it appertaineth to forgive sins. Spare me therefore, good Lord, Spare thy creature, whom thou hast redeemed. Enter not into judgement with thy servant, who is vile earth and a miserable sinner ; but so turn thine anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my vileness, and so make haste to help me in this
C world

world, that I may ever live with Thee in the world to come, thro' Jesus Christ. *Commination.*

COLLECT V.

Turn thou me, O good Lord, and so shall I be turned. Be favourable, O Lord, be favourable to thy creature, who turns to Thee in weeping, fasting, and praying. For thou sparest when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy. Hear me, O Lord, for thy mercy is great, and after the multitude of thy compassions look upon me, thro' the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Commination.*

The ANTHEM.

OUT of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth; that he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity, and deliver the children appointed unto death. Psalm cii. 19, 20.

I, saith the Lord, have called *Christ* in righteousness, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. Isa. xliii. 6, 7.

Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will give thee for a covenant of the people—that thou mayest say to the prisoners, “Go forth;” and to them that are in darkness, “Shew yourselves.” Isa. xlix. 8, 9.

Christ having opened the book of the prophet Isaiah, found the place where it was written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised.—And he began to say, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. Luke iv. 18, 21.

Surely

Surely, he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace is upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own *wicked* way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison. He was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people was he stricken. He made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; He has put him to grief: When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death. He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa. liii. 4 &c.

The Lord satisfieth the empty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness; such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being fast bound in misery and iron. Because they have rebelled against the word of the Lord, he also brought down their heart thro' heaviness: they fell down and there was none to help them. So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he brought them out of the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in sunder. Psalm cvii. 9, &c.

The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. Isa. li. 14.

O Let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners come before Thee. According to the greatness of thy power, preserve Thou those that are appointed to die. Psalm lxi. 12.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy Name; which thing if thou wilt grant me,

then shall the righteous resort unto my company, [*or, I shall be fitted for theirs.*] Psalm cxlii. 9.

The Lord looseth men out of prison. The Lord helpeth them that are fallen. Blessed is he whose hope is in the Lord his God, who keepeth his promise for ever. Psalm cxlvi. 4, 5, 7, 8.

The penitential psalms are those which are appointed for Ash-Wednesday, namely, the vi. xxxii. xxxviii. cii. cxxx. cxliii. with the li. the murderer's psalm, which our church directs all her clergy and laity to say on their knees. See *the Commination*.

For the first lesson you may read Joel ii. or Dan. ix. and for the second, Luke xv. or 2 Pet. iii. If you have no Bible, instead of those lessons you may read the following portions of the Scriptures.

The Gospel of the Thief.

Is written, John xix. 17. Mark xv. 27.
Luke xxiii. 29, &c.

THEY took Jesus and led him away, and he bearing his cross went forth unto a place called the place of a scull, which is called in the Hebrew, *Golgotha*, where they crucified him.—And with him they crucified two thieves, the one on his right hand and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, And he was numbered among the transgressors.—And one of the malefactors who were hanging, reviled on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man has done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom! And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. John xix. 17. Mark xv. 27. Luke xxiii. 39, &c.

Instead

Instead of the *Epistle* you may read the *Gospel*
of the murderer, written Acts xvi. 25, &c.

WHEN the magistrates had laid many stripes on Paul and Silas, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safe, who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew out his sword, and would have *killed himself*, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.—And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.

AN EJACULATION

For a sinner, whose death-warrant is signed.

IN the midst of life I am in death: Of whom may I seek for succour, but of Thee, O Lord, who for my sins art justly displeased! Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver me not into the bitter pains of eternal death! Shut not thy merciful ears to my prayers; but spare me, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O
C 3 holy

holy, and merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy judge eternal, suffer me not at my last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee! *Burial of the dead.*

A C O L L E C T.

O Merciful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom, whosoever believeth, shall live, tho' he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall not die eternally; I meekly beseech thee to raise me from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, that when I shall depart this life, I may be found acceptable in thy sight, thro' Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.
Burial of the dead.

A short L I T A N Y.

O GOD the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner.

Remember not, Lord, my offences, neither take thou vengeance of my sins: spare me, good Lord, spare thy creature, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood, and be not angry with me for ever.

From sin, from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, good Lord deliver me.

From all blindness and hardness of heart, and from contempt of thy word and commandment, good Lord deliver me.

By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost; in all my tribulation, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord deliver me.

I beseech thee to hear me, good Lord, that it may please thee to give me true repentance, to forgive me
all

all my sins, and to endue me with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend my life according to thy holy word.

O God, make speed to save me.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant me thy peace.

O Christ, hear me.

Lord, have mercy upon me.

Christ, have mercy upon me.

O Lord, deal not with me after my sins.

Neither reward me after my iniquities.

Graciously look upon my afflictions.

Pitifully behold the sorrows of my heart.

Mercifully forgive my sins.

Favourably with mercy hear my prayers.

O Son of David have mercy upon me.

Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear me, O Christ.

O Lord, let thy mercy be shewed upon me.

As I do put my trust in Thee.

A C O L L E C T.

THE Almighty God, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey; be now and evermore my defence, and make me *know* and *feel*, that there is no other name under heaven given to man, in whom, and thro' whom I may receive health and salvation, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Visitation of the sick.* Our Father, &c.

Unto thy gracious mercy and protection, O God, I commit my soul. O Lord, bless me and keep me. O Lord, make thy face to shine upon me, and be gracious unto me! O Lord, lift up thy countenance upon me, and give me peace both now and evermore! *Amen.*
Visitation of the sick.

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A

PENITENTIAL HYMN.

Compiled from three Hymns at the end of the Common-prayer-book, called, The humble suit of a sinner—The lamentation of a sinner—and The lamentation. One of which was given out by the Clerk at the gallows, before John Wilkes was turned off.

1. **S**INCE now thou seest my restless eyes,
My tears and grievous groan ;
Attend unto my suit, O Lord,
Mark my complaint and moan.
2. My sin has so inclosed me,
And compass'd me about ;
That I am now remediless,
If mercy help not out.
3. For mortal man cannot relieve,
Or mitigate my pain :
But only Christ, my Lord and God,
Who for my sins was slain :
4. Whose bloody wounds are yet to see,
Tho' not with mortal eye :
Yet do thy saints behold them, Lord,
And so I trust, shall I. —
5. I come unto the throne of grace,
Where mercy does abound ;
Desiring mercy for my sins,
To heal my deadly wound.
6. Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask ;
This is the total Sum :
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
O let thy mercy come !

7. Till

7. Till then to thee still will I cry
To wash away my crime.
Thy blood, O Lord, is not yet dry,
It may still help in time.
-

Another H Y M N,

For a dying finner, or a condemned
malefactor.

1. **O** Thou that hangedst on the tree,
My curse and sufferings to remove,
Pity a soul that looks to Thee,
And save me by thy dying love.
2. Outcast of men, to Thee I fly,
To Thee who wilt the worst receive ;
Forgive, and make me fit to die ;
Alas! I am not fit to live.
3. I own my punishment is just,
I suffer for my evil here,
But in *thy* sufferings, Lord I trust.
Thine, only *Thine* my soul can clear.
4. I have no outward righteousness,
No merits, or good works to plead ;
I only can be sav'd by Grace ;
Thy Grace will here be free indeed.
5. Save me by grace thro' faith alone,
A faith Thou must thyself impart,
A faith that *would* by works be shewn,
A faith that purifies the heart ;
6. A faith that does the mountains move,
A faith that shews my sins forgiven,
A faith that sweetly works by love,
And ascertains my claim to heaven.
7. This

7. This is the faith I humbly seek,
The faith in thine all-cleansing blood;
That blood which does for sinners speak,
O let it speak for me to God!
8. Canst thou reject my dying prayer,
Or cast me out who come to thee?
My sins ah! Wherefore didst thou bear?
Jesu, remember *Calvary*!
9. Number'd with the transgressors, Thou,
Between the felons crucified,
Speak to my heart, and tell me *now*,
Wherefore hast Thou for sinners died?
10. For *me* wast Thou not lifted up,
For *me* a bleeding victim made?
That *I*, the abject *I*, might hope,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid.
11. O might I with my closing eyes
Thee in thy bloody vesture see,
And cast me on thy sacrifice:
Jesus, my Lord, remember me!
12. Thou art into thy kingdom come:
I own Thee with my parting breath:
God of all grace, reverse my doom,
And save me from eternal death.
13. Hast thou not wrought the sure belief
I feel this moment in thy Blood?
And am not *I*, the dying Thief?
And art not Thou, *my* Lord, *my* God?
14. Thy precious Blood to all apply,
To all, to *me* thy Spirit give,
And I (let each cry out) And I
With Thee in Paradise shall live.

The

The Compiler's Apology.

SHOULD some of my Readers blame me for supposing, that a *penitential Office*, proper for a *dying malefactor*, will just suit any other *true penitent*; I beg leave to advance a few arguments in my own defence.

(1) The deepest expressions of the preceding office, are put by our church in the mouths of *all* her penitent children without exception: nor could I find deeper words for dying thieves and murderers.

(2) Our Lord not only commands us to *render unto Cæsar*, or man, *the things that are Cæsar's* or man's; but also to *render unto God the things that are God's*. Mat. xxii. 21. Hence it is he asks by the mouth of a prophet: *Will a man ROB God? Yet [adds he] ye have ROBBED ME. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In offerings:* That is, in keeping from me the oblation of your hearts, in restraining prayer, praise, and obedience, the offerings which I principally call for. Mal. iii. 9.—Again, St. John declares, that *Whoever hateth his brother*, or his neighbour, tho' but for a moment, in a sudden fit of passion, *is a murderer*, 1 John iii. 15. Now if an unprejudiced person considers what is implied in these and the like scriptures, remembering that God's law extends no less to our thoughts and wishes, than to our words and actions; he will be struck with that saying of our Lord: *He that is without sin among you, let him first stand up as the proud Pharisee, and cast a stone at an adulteress, a thief, or a murderer.*

(3) My reader and myself are as certainly condemned to die for sin, as any felon in the world, on whom an awful sentence of death is already past. And tho' I
hope

hope we shall not die so *shamefully*, yet a death a thousand times more *lingering* and *painful* probably awaits our perishing bodies.

(4) Again, when our Lord went to Calvary, bearing the ponderous cross, to which he was to be nailed, *a company of people*, [composed no doubt of the most harmless and compassionate of the spectators] *bewailed and lamented him*. But Jesus turning unto them said, *Weep not for me, tho' I am going to suffer with some of the vilest malefactors; but weep for YOURSELVES and YOUR CHILDREN.—For if, by divine permission, they [my executioners] do these things in a green tree, i. e. if I, who am the ever-green tree of life, the ever-fruitful tree of righteousness, am going to be lifted up on this accursed wood on Calvary, or the place of a scull; what shall be done in the dry, blasted, barren trees, that are fit for the ax of divine justice, just ready for the lightening of divine indignation, for the fiery furnace, the burning tophet of divine vengeance?* Luke xxiii. 27, &c.

(5) Once more, if Jesus Christ our surety *suffered death for us*, as well as for *thieves*; if he was executed for us, as well as for *murderers*; yea if he was actually *whipt*, and then *hanged* upon the cross, the most infamous, excruciating, and bloody species of gallows; Does it become us, wantonly, to *drive the cart* of our compassion from under poor dying criminals? And is it either humane or reasonable, to *turn them off* from us with pharisaic abhorrence, as if we were creatures of a far more excellent species than they? See an *Appeal to matter of fact, or a rational demonstration of man's corrupt and lost estate*, p. 64. &c. Where you will find a parallel drawn between a dying nobleman, and a dying highwayman, which will probably convince you, that the difference between them in their last moments, consists more in appearance than in reality.

THE END.

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